

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

**SALUTING SERVICE ACADEMY
STUDENTS BRIANNA BURNSTAD**

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary group of young men and women who have been chosen as future leaders in our armed forces by the prestigious United States service academies. It is a privilege to send such a fine group from the Third District of Texas to pursue a world-class education and serve our Nation.

As we keep them and their families in our prayers, may we never forget the sacrifices they are preparing to make while defending our freedoms all across the globe. I am so proud of each one. God bless them and God bless America.

Today I salute Brianna Burnstad, a United States Military Academy Appointee. Brianna is a graduate of Plano Senior High School where she played volleyball, while simultaneously participating on a club volleyball team serving as the team captain. Brianna served as a member of student congress, the National Honor Society, and Third District Congressional Youth Advisory Committee. She was also active in her church as a confirmation teacher, youth choir representative, and took part in mission trips. Brianna wants to attend the United States Military Academy following in the footsteps of three generations of her family because she wants to pursue a career in the Army and wants to dedicate herself to something larger than herself. Brianna is not only impressed that West Point challenges its students academically, but also emphasizes the importance of physical and leadership training.

**IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF CLARA
MAE SHEPARD LUPER**

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, we honor Clara Mae Shepard Luper and her lifelong work towards achieving equality for all in the state of Oklahoma. She has been the face of the Oklahoma Civil Rights movement since 1958 and to many she is a treasure to the United States and an icon for the struggle for equality.

In the face of segregation and wide-spread discrimination, Clara Luper decided that enough was enough. Mrs. Luper's courage, determination, and integrity cultivated her strong leadership to organize a sit-in protest at the Katz Drug Store in downtown Oklahoma City, a business that refused to serve black customers. Mrs. Luper was fearless when she

organized civil disobedience demonstrations and she unapologetically used these demonstrations to challenge the state of Oklahoma's allowance for discrimination against blacks.

I recall Mrs. Luper spoke about her mother witnessing a Black man who had been hung by a White mob in Texas. Regardless of her experience, however, her mother instilled in her a belief of "loving people, no matter what their color."

Mrs. Luper's mother believed that freedom and equality were guarantees of the Constitution and Mrs. Luper was bound to make sure the state of Oklahoma made good on that promise. Thus, she continued to influence others with the beliefs her parents taught her by including young people in the struggle for civil rights and immersing herself in demonstrations for equality across the country.

Mrs. Luper participated in the march in Selma against segregation in 1965. She was arrested then and many other times for protesting against social injustice. She was even beaten by demonstrators protesting against the movement in Selma. However, she courageously continued.

For over 40 years Mrs. Luper traveled with groups of young people from Oklahoma to conventions across the United States that rallied to end segregation in America. During these conventions, some students witnessed desegregated public bathrooms and restaurants for the first time in their lives. However, I most admire her journey with these young people to the March on Washington in 1963 and her leadership to hundreds of youth in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, Youth Council in Oklahoma.

As an educator for over 40 years, Mrs. Luper taught American history to Oklahoma youth. Although she retired in 1991, many of her students still credit her for instilling in them a sense of worth and confidence that they could go out and change society for the better. Some of them considered her more than an educator, with many to this day still referring to her as "Mom."

She also had an interest in public service. In 1972, Mrs. Luper threw her hat into the political ring and ran for the U.S. Senate. She stated "as a teacher, I was interested in getting some practical experience in the political realm. And I sure did that." Although she did not win the nomination from the Democratic Party, many current politicians in Oklahoma and abroad have benefited from her courage and significant involvement in Oklahoma politics.

In the years following, Mrs. Luper founded the Miss Black Oklahoma Scholarship Pageant. Attending and affording college and a deep knowledge of American and civil rights history are the foundations of the scholarship pageant program. Young black Oklahoma women have benefited Mrs. Luper's vision to provide educational opportunities and scholarships to rising young leaders in the state and I am grateful for her efforts and investment in America's youth.

53 years ago, civil rights leader and icon Clara Luper displayed the inspiring courage to better this country for all of its citizens. I know that this Congress and the people of this Nation can work to further the ideals of Mrs. Luper and the Civil Rights Movement.

[From the New York Times, Jun. 11, 2011]

CLARA LUPER, A LEADER OF CIVIL RIGHTS SIT-INS, DIES AT 88

(By Dennis Hevesi)

Her name does not resonate like that of Rosa Parks, and she did not garner the kind of national attention that a group of black students did when they took seats at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., in February 1960. But Clara Luper was a seminal figure in the sit-ins of the civil rights movement.

Ms. Luper, who led one of the first sit-ins—at a drugstore in Oklahoma City 18 months before the Greensboro action—died Wednesday at her home in Oklahoma City, her daughter Marilyn Hildreth said. She was 88.

Ms. Luper was a history teacher at Dunjee High School in 1957 when she agreed to become adviser to the Oklahoma City N.A.A.C.P.'s youth council. The youngsters asked what they could do to help the movement.

On Aug. 19, 1958, Ms. Luper led three other adult chaperons and 14 members of the youth council into the Katz Drug Store in Oklahoma City, where they took seats at the counter and asked for Coca-Colas. Denied service, they refused to leave until closing time. They returned on Saturday mornings for several weeks.

The sit-ins received local press coverage. Eventually the Katz chain agreed to integrate lunch counters at its 38 stores in Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas and Iowa. Over the next six years, the local N.A.A.C.P. chapter held sit-ins that led to the desegregation of almost every eating establishment in Oklahoma City.

"The actions that Ms. Luper and those youngsters took at the Katz Drug Store inspired the rank and file of the N.A.A.C.P. and activists on college campuses across the country," Roslyn M. Brock, the group's national chairwoman, said Friday.

Ms. Luper's activism extended beyond the sit-ins. A week after that first protest, 17 white churches in Oklahoma City let members of her youth group attend services. At another church, a pastor asked two youngsters to leave. The Associated Press reported at the time. "God did not intend Negroes and whites to worship together," he told them.

Ms. Luper was arrested 26 times at civil rights protests. Now a street is named after her in Oklahoma City, and flags flew Friday at half-staff in her honor.

Born Clara Mae Shepard on May 3, 1923, to Ezell and Isabel Shepard, Ms. Luper grew up near Hoffman, Okla. Her father was a brick worker, and her mother was a maid. "When she was a child, her brother got sick and they wouldn't treat him at the hospital," Ms. Hildreth said. "That really triggered her."

Ms. Luper is also survived by another daughter, Chelle Wilson; a son, Calvin; a sister, Oneita Brown; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. Her husband, Bert Luper, died before her.

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